

## Lopez, Donna

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**From:** Young Kim [ycknorris@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 16, 2015 10:41 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** Rossi, Rich; Lopez, Donna  
**Subject:** Planning Board Process Improvements  
**Attachments:** 2014-06-30-Mayors-Meeting.pdf

Dear Councillors,

I would like to thank Councillor Cheung for proposing an ombudsman to advocate for the residents and Councillor Kelley for speaking up for the need to prevent minor amendments to a project adding up to something Special Permit (SP) never intended. And I like to thank CDD staff for their tremendous effort in putting together the recommendations for improving Planning Board (PB) process.

Cambridge Chronicle's coverage of the Jan. 12 roundtable discussion on the PB process improvement started out with the headline "You get what you ask for" from Councillor Carlone and Councillor Toomey's opposition to an ombudsman. From the experiences of the conversion of former North Cambridge Catholic High School into residential units, "The developer gets what he wants" would have been more appropriate.

The initial plan submitted for the SP proposed 35 residential units with 88 bedrooms at 40 Norris St, a 75% increase from 115 existing bedrooms on the entire Street. Then Chairman Russell called "it's building a tenement, it's building something that's actually worse." (12/ 7/2010 hearing transcript). The intention of the developer was obvious – cram as many people as possible into that building to maximize profit with total disregard for the impact on the neighborhood. With the help of the amended Zoning Ordinance Section 5.28.2, thorough debate by the PB and diligent work by the concerned neighbors, we thought a reasonable compromise was reached when SP was granted for 25 residential units (and 2 commercial units) with 46 bedrooms. However, due to numerous problems in the SP development process, Certificate of Occupancy (CO) has been granted with 70 potential bedrooms through lofts/libraries/dens with cased openings that could easily be turned into bedrooms. Although the maximum approved number of bedrooms in a unit was 3, some of the units were listed as having 4, 4.5 or 5 bedrooms until we brought this to the attention of the Mayor and City officials. The developer managed to achieve 80% of his initial plan!

I am attaching a report we presented to the City officials at a meeting hosted by the Mayor on June 30, 2014 which traces the history of the project and lists the issues with the project. PB process should not stop when a SP is granted. Rather, the process should continue throughout the implementation phase to ensure the terms and conditions of the SP are adhered to. I urge you to consider seriously Councillors Cheung's and Kelley's recommendations. A SP Specialist/ombudsman is to oversee a SP project from the inception to granting of CO acting as an advocate for the citizens and as a liaison between the developer, PB, various City departments and affected residents; and to enforce SP process protocol, such as timely submission of documents and strict document control.

Thank you for your attention. I would love to hear your thoughts on the above and I will be more than happy to meet with any of you to go over the attached.

Have a great weekend,

Respectrully,

Young Kim

17 Norris Street